May Day March on April 28 in Brooklyn:

Cuomo & the Billionaires Force Workers to Pay for The Capitalist Crisis. We Have A Better Idea!

Since taking office last year, Governor Andrew Cuomo has:

• Reduced pensions for all new public workers – forcing them to work more years, deducting more money from their paychecks, and providing lower benefits when they retire.

• Imposed a three-year wage freeze on 120,000 NYS workers, and forced them to accept nine unpaid furlough days. State workers will also have to pay more for their health premiums. This all means a loss of income for these workers and their families.

• Cut billions from schools and health care, causing layoffs of teachers and hospital workers and larger class size for students and worse care for patients. $103 million was cut from CUNY, and student tuition will rise $300 a year for the next five years, a 37% increase! Cuomo is also threatening to close two Brooklyn hospitals – Downstate Hospital and Kingsboro Psychiatric Center.

A Tale of Two Cities

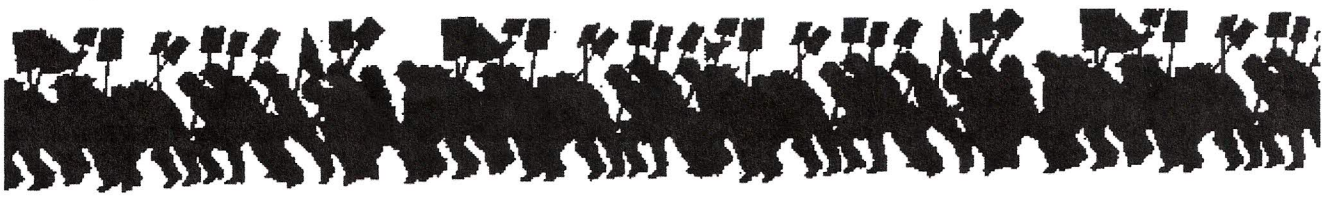
NYC is really two cities: one for those who struggle to make ends meet and one for the fabulously wealthy. In one city, 1.6 million people in NYC live in poverty and millions more live in near-poverty, forced to watch every penny. In the other city, a pampered elite live in penthouse apartments or suburban mansions, own expensive vacation homes and cars, send their children to prestigious private schools, receive the best medical care and never have to worry about retirement.

It is these people – the executives of Wall Street investment firms and banks, the real estate tycoons – whose greedy decisions caused the economic crisis. Yet they intend to make the rest of us pay – by lowering our wages and benefits and cutting social programs, like education. The money is there to pay for schools and decent medical care, but look how it's hoarded by the very wealthy:

• NYS and NYC are teeming with millionaires and billionaires. 44,000 millionaires live in NYS -- half in the Big Apple. These are the poor cousins of the 60 billionaires living in NYC, led by David Koch (worth $21.5 billion), the notorious funder of right-wing and anti-labor campaigns, and Michael Bloomberg (worth $18 billion), who's made the public schools even worse and blamed it on teachers.

• As in the rest of the country, the gap between rich and poor in NYC continues to widen. In 2007, the wealthiest 1% received 44% of all income – up from 20% in 1990. The median income for the wealthiest 5% of Manhattan residents was $857,000 in 2009. The total income of this wealthiest 5% was TWICE the total income of the bottom 60%. A tale of two cities indeed!

As the super-rich grew richer over the years, they used their political power to lower their taxes! Federal taxes on the rich fell from a top marginal tax rate of 70% in 1980 to 35% today. In NYS, the top tax rate was lowered from 15% in the 1970's to less than 7% by the 1990's. Andrew Cuomo's father, Mario Cuomo, was one of the Governors responsible for lowering taxes on the wealthiest.



Who Does Cuomo and the politicians represent?

The owners of the big corporations and banks – the capitalists – cultivate politicians like Andrew Cuomo. They provide huge sums of money to pay for the politician's expensive election campaigns, and they promise lucrative jobs to these politicians when they leave office. They employ an army of lobbyists to see that the laws are written to serve their interests. The golden rule of politics is "He who has the gold makes the rules," and this is true whether it's Democrats or Republicans in power.

Andrew Cuomo is a perfect example of this. Wealthy real estate magnates and Wall Street investors bankrolled his campaigns for Attorney General and Governor. After leaving the Clinton administration, Cuomo was invited to work for real estate titan Andrew Farkis, who paid him $2.5 million over three years. Farkis and his business associates then contributed $800,000 to Cuomo's electoral campaigns. The list of big donors to Cuomo's campaigns reads like a "Who's Who in NYC's Business Elite": Real estate executives Bruce Ratner, Richard Lefrak and Stephen Ross, investment banker Felix Rohatyn, private equity manager Peter Peterson, and arch-conservative David Koch.

When the election was over, and Cuomo began his campaign to cut taxes on the wealthy and reduce the salaries and benefits of public workers, the big real estate interests formed a group called the "Committee to Save New York," which spent lavishly on ads supporting the Governor's anti-labor program. When the dust had settled, the rich had what they wanted.

Occupy, Then Run Society Ourselves

You can push people around for just so long and then slowly but surely they begin to push back. So hundreds of CUNY professors demonstrated in the fall against the looming threat of adjunct professors losing their health care insurance. Recently, workers took to the streets of Brooklyn to oppose hospital closings. Car wash workers are unionizing and insisting on higher pay and benefits. Communists in Progressive Labor Party enthusiastically participate in these reform struggles.

However, we have a bigger idea. As communists, we think that working people should run society – the factories, the farms, the banks, the stores, the government. The ruling elite insists they're the only ones capable of running things. Sure, look at what a great job they've done: economic crisis, chronic unemployment, unending wars, poverty and insecurity, pervasive racism and sexism, and a planet imperiled by global warming!

As we threaten their control, the rulers will try to divide us by race, gender, occupation, educational levels, nationality, citizenship status and other ways. May Day is our reply: People from different backgrounds marching and celebrating the idea of working class solidarity, internationalism as opposed to national chauvinism and brutal wars of occupation, multi-racial unity rather than segregation and racial division, ending capitalism and building a workers-run society – communism. Please join us!

Save the date:

May Day March
Saturday, April 28, 12 noon
Brooklyn

May Day Dinner
(following the march), 3 PM

Exact locations to be announced soon

Progressive Labor Party
http://www.plp.org/